

# **HABITAT CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

for the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)

A **regular meeting** of the Habitat Conservation Advisory Committee (HCAC) was held in the Washington City Council Chambers on **March 22, 2016**.

Committee members present were:

Chris Blake, Chairman  
John Bramall, Vice Chairman  
Henry Maddux  
Larry Crist  
Dawna Ferris-Rowley  
Marc Mortensen  
Bob Sandberg

Environmental Organization  
Mayor's Association  
Utah Dept. of Natural Resources (UDNR)  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
Citizen-at-Large  
HCP Administrator

Absent and Excused were:

Chris Hart

Local Development

Also present were:

Lacey McIntyre  
Cameron Rognan  
Ann McLuckie  
Julie Applegate  
Eric Clarke  
Lisa Rutherford  
Paul VanDam

Washington County HCP – Recorder  
Technical Committee (HCP)  
Technical Committee (DWR)  
St. George News  
Washington County Attorney  
Citizen  
Citizen

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chris Blake called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

## **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda is a means of expediting routine matters which come before the committee for approval. The consent portion of the agenda is approved by one (1) non-debatable motion. If any member wishes to remove an item from the consent portion of the agenda, then that item becomes the first order of business on the regular agenda.

- a. **Approval of Agenda**
- b. **Review and Approve Regular Meeting Minutes**
  - 1. **February 23, 2016**
- c. **Next Meeting Date**
  - 1. **April 26, 2016**

**MOTION** by Dawna Ferris-Rowley to approve the Consent Agenda.

Seconded by John Bramall.

Discussion: None.

Vote was taken: All voted aye.

Motion passed.

**3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- a. None**

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

- a. Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA) Training – Eric Clarke**

Washington County Attorney Eric Clarke presented Exhibit 4-a-1, an Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA) training. This training is given yearly to the HCAC and defines what a meeting is and discusses the laws by which open and closed meetings should be properly noticed and conducted. Eric also discussed penalties for not following the OPMA.

- b. Washington County Presentation on Land Acquisitions – Eric Clarke**

Eric Clarke presented Exhibit 4-b-1, a 20 year overview of the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). He mentioned representatives from the County will be traveling to Denver next week to meet with representatives at the Regional Fish and Wildlife office to discuss the HCP permit renewal. The presentation included a map of the Upper Virgin River recovery area as well as discussion on tortoise management, population monitoring, the tortoise population trend, and translocation success. Drought and wild fires have had a large impact on the desert tortoise population.

The HCP resulted in the 62,000 acre Red Cliffs Desert Reserve. Eric outlined the signatories and their responsibilities to the HCP as well as the Washington County funding for the HCP. Additionally, he mentioned the County has prohibited OHVs and ATVs in the Reserve, retired grazing allotments, restored habitat, implemented trail steward and volunteer programs, built fencing along Reserve boundaries and roads, completed tortoise awareness trainings and outreach presentations, as well as created a comprehensive website for the Reserve.

Eric then spoke about land acquisitions in the Reserve. There were 7,671 private and municipal acres in 1996. The number of private acres is now 1,288. Approximately 1,200 of those private acres have been held up in litigation for a majority of the past 20 years. There were initially 10,938 School Trust Land acres in the Reserve. That number has decreased to a remaining 6,495 School Trust Land acres. There have been 1,300 acres added to the Reserve since 1996. Overall, he believes the Washington County HCP is successful and should be allowed to extend the permit.

**5. UTILITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

- a. None**

## **6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **a. Update on land acquisition efforts – Bob/Dawna**

Dawna reported the appraisal has been ordered for the Long Valley exchange. That exchange continues to move forward.

The BLM sent responses to the six in holders who expressed interest to sell their private in holdings. BLM selected one tract to pursue with the funding in hand today from a previous land sale. The individual who holds that property, Mr. Doyle, is interested in moving forward with a direct purchase. The appraisal on his property has been ordered and other steps are in a degree of forward motion.

Appraisals have returned on the 6 tracts that were offered for sale in 2014 that did not sell. They are now for sale and will be available for purchase through a sealed bid process. Funding generated from those sealed bid sales will then be available for additional purchases of in holdings.

Bob added the HCP submitted applications to the State for the Endangered Species Mitigation Funding (ESMF) with hope that it can be used to help with the match for Section 6 applications. The State has submitted a Section 6 application to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **b. Update on permit renewal – Larry/Bob**

Larry mentioned he will be attending the meeting in Denver to discuss the permit renewal with the Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **c. HCP Administrator's Report - Bob**

#### **1. Clearances**

Bob mentioned the spring clearance window is now open. HCP staff went to Springdale yesterday and cleared a project site there. There is also a site out by Green Valley that will need a clearance soon, though that project may not be ready to clear by this spring clearance window. Cameron Rognan mentioned the staff also walked the Sentierre project again to check for any tortoise signs.

#### **2. Mining claim assessment work**

Bob reported the HCP has been working with the BLM regarding a mining claimant, Mr. Eager, who has mining claims in Zone 4. He applied to do his assessment work so the BLM and HCP staff met with him to give tortoise training and assist with his assessment.

### **3. Confluence Park property purchase update**

Bob updated the committee on the prior proposal for funding assistance for an adjacent parcel of Confluence Park. There was an ESMF proposal and Section 6 proposal submitted to help get funding for that property.

Henry added that the Virgin River Program expressed interest in the flood plain portion of that property, which totaled 38 acres.

### **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

This item is reserved for items not listed on this agenda. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this agenda item (three minutes per person).

a. Lisa Rutherford commented on item 4-b-1. She wanted to emphasize the Reserve is first and foremost for the tortoises. She believes the human impacts are great and emphasis should be on the preservation of the species.

### **8. MEMBER REPORTS & REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

a. Marc Mortensen reported on the Quarry Trail dedication from the previous weekend. He said there was a good sized turn out and most of the effort was put together by Wayne Pace, Sons of Utah Pioneers, and scouts. The trail is a well marked and fairly narrow trail at 18 inches wide. The only thing missing at this point is the netting that the City will be putting up soon.

b. John Bramall mentioned there will be a dedication in Hurricane for the Confluence Park Trailhead east of the Reserve on April 16<sup>th</sup> at 10am.

c. Henry Maddux mentioned, on the Endangered Species Mitigation Fund that would provide the match to Section 6 grants, the committee meets on April 28<sup>th</sup> and will decide funding at that time.

### **9. ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by John Bramall to adjourn the meeting.  
**Seconded** by Marc Mortensen.  
**Discussion**: None.  
**Vote was taken**: All voted aye.  
**Motion passed**.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by Lacey McIntyre.